

Chapter 2: Burien’s past and future

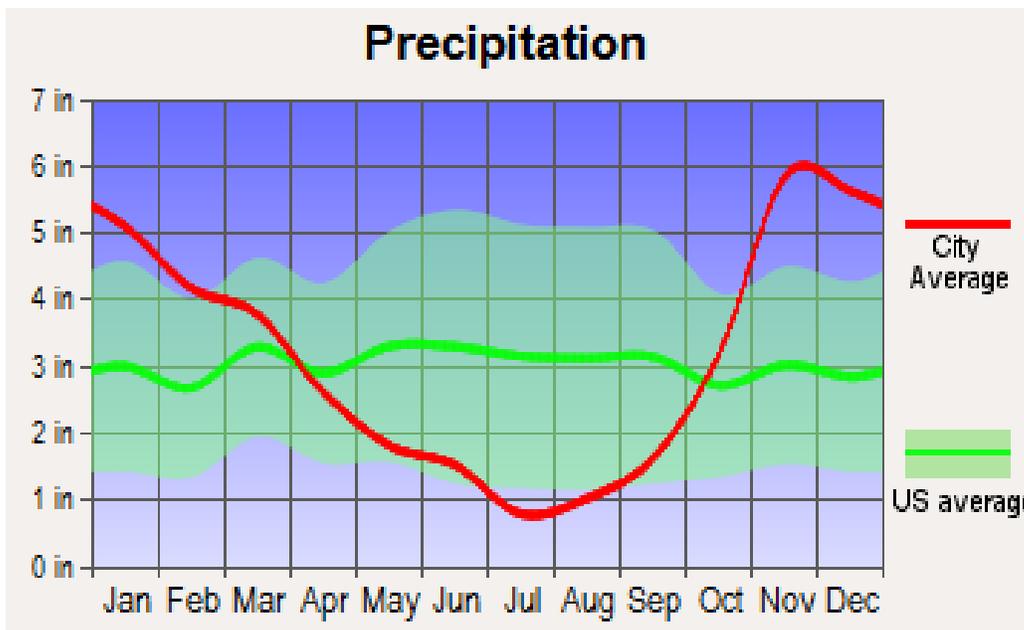
According to the United States Census Bureau, Burien has a total area of 13.2 square miles, of which 7.4 square miles is land and 5.8 square miles or 44% is water.

What is Burien’s environment?

Climate

Washington State's climate is strongly influenced by moisture-laden air masses created in the Pacific Ocean. The air masses may move into the region any time of the year, but particularly during fall, winter and spring seasons.

In Burien, mean temperatures vary from a high of 75 degrees in August to a low of 35 degrees Fahrenheit in January with extreme variations recorded at - 1 to a high of 95 degrees Fahrenheit.



Average annual precipitation is about 38 inches with a mean growing season with temperatures above 32 degrees Fahrenheit for about 300 days. Approximately 80% of the precipitation occurs from October through March with less than 6% falling during June, July, and August.

On average, Burien may receive up to 6 inches of snow in January with sunshine for about 20% of the time and between 50- 70% sunshine during July and August. Wind speeds average between 7-9 miles per hour in January and 6-8 miles per hour in September.

Earth

Burien is located within the eastern edge of the Puget Trough section of the Cascade Mountain province of the Pacific Mountain System. The Cascade Mountains were created by continuous volcanic activity along the border of the underlying continental plates.

The mountains were in turn, subject to the action of periodic glacial intrusions - the most recent being the Pleistocene glacial period more than 15,000 years ago. The Pleistocene glacial intrusion gradually carved and flooded Puget Sound, the lowland areas, and other valleys alongside the Cascade foothills.

Burien is located within Puget Sound with topography ranging from 0 to about 440 feet above sea level. The hilltops overlooking Puget Sound drop off abruptly in places, with slopes ranging from 25 to 50%.

Water

Salmon Creek - and a number of other small streams drain the northwestern portion of Burien flowing from the upland areas through Salmon Creek Ravine and also through Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park into Puget Sound adjacent to the Southwest Sewer District's treatment plant on Shorewood Drive SW.

Miller and Walker Creeks - and a series of tributary streams drain the north and southeast portions of Burien flowing south to empty into Puget Sound south of Sylvester Drive SW just below city corporate limits with Normandy Park.

The upper limits of Miller Creek merge with another seasonal tributary stream that drains east from Lake Burien merging at 5 Corners in the south boundary with Normandy Park, then continues southwest through Normandy Park draining into the north fork of Miller Creek that then empties into Puget Sound.

The upper limits of Miller Creek are subject to flooding during heavy rainfall particularly around Tub Lake, Lake Reba, and Lora Lake.

Walker Creek originates in wetlands located in south Burien adjacent to SR-509 flowing southwest to empty into Puget Sound directly adjacent to the North Fork of Miller Creek.

Lakes - are water bodies greater than 20 acres in size or more than 6 feet in depth. Lake Burien is the only lake within Burien and is publicly owned by Washington State. Private property interests own shoreline including access to the lake - see Burien Shoreline Master Program for details.

Ponds - are water bodies less than 20 acres in size or less than 6 feet in depth. Arbor Lake is the only significant pond within Burien and is partially owned by adjacent private property owners on the east shore and Burien on the west shore.

Wetlands - small or moderate sized wet spots, bogs, peat and muck deposits of from 1 to 5 acres are scattered along the Miller Creek drainage corridor along the east city boundary and include the lands around Tub Lake, Reba Lake, and Lora Lake along the boundary with SeaTac. Wetlands within Seahurst Park and throughout Burien are identified on the City of Burien Critical Areas map.

Scattered small wetlands are located on the south city boundary near SW 168th Street, South 170th and South 171st Streets that drain into Miller Creek.

Walker Creek Wetlands is a large wetland complex located between Des Moines Drive SW and SR-509 north of South 176th Street.

Floodplains - and flooded areas include alluvial soils - which are former riverbeds and streambeds, and retention ponds that fill during heavy rainfall, sometimes infrequently, often for extended periods during rainy seasons and are identified on the City of Burien Critical Areas map.

The upper stretches of the North Fork of Miller Creek flood in and around Tub Lake, Reba Lake, and Lora Lake; and when merging with the South Fork to drain into Puget Sound during heavy rainfall.

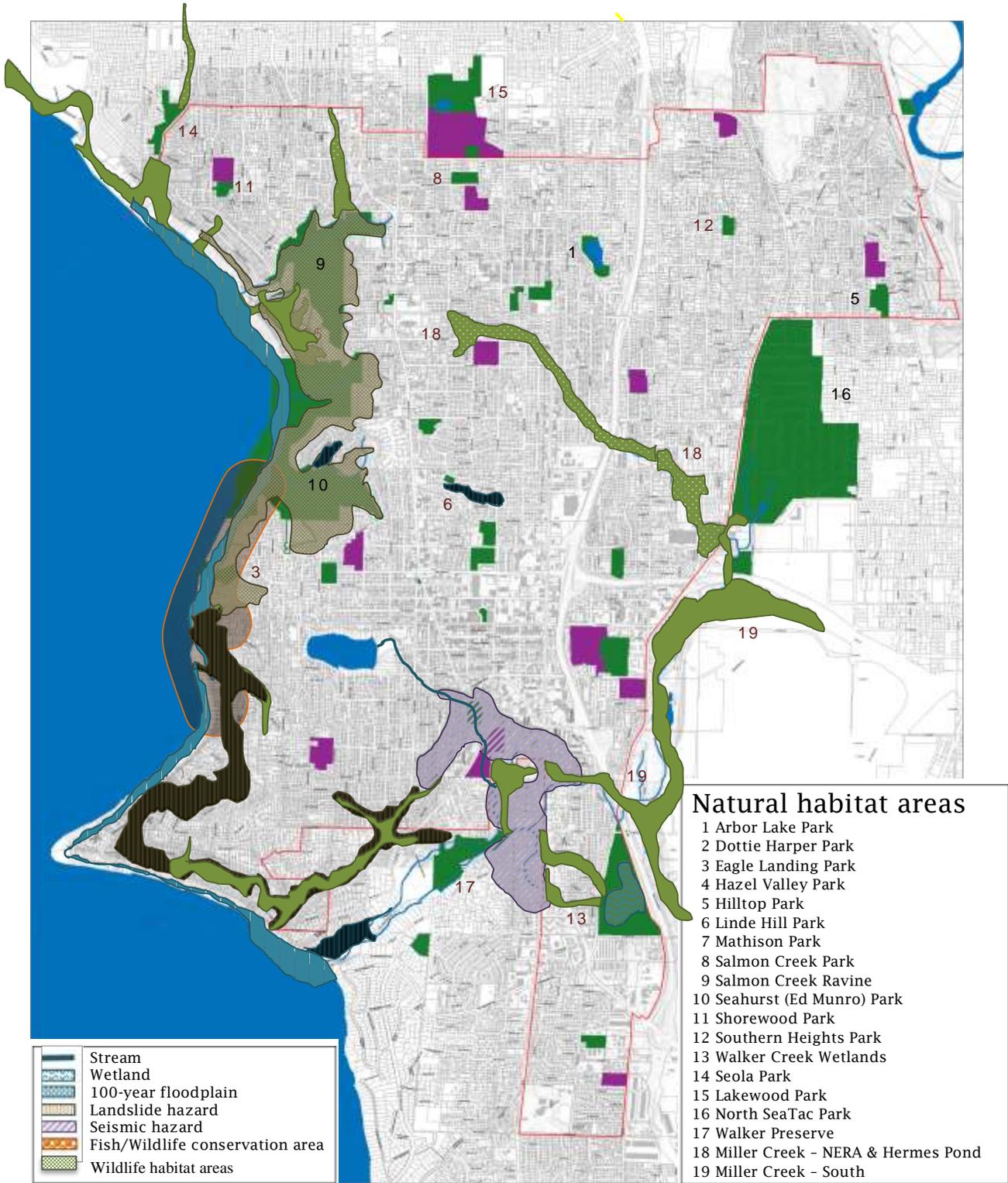
What are Burien's wildlife habitats?

Wildlife habitats are generally classified as marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial categories. Many wildlife species rely upon most, even all, of these habitat categories for survival. Burien has all 4 categories of wildlife habitat.

Marine habitat

Marine habitats are saltwater areas that extend outward from the upper limit of wave spray on land. In Burien, marine habitats extend the complete length of the Puget Sound shoreline.

The deeper waters and narrow channel of Puget Sound between Burien and Vashon Island, as well as the shallower waters along the bench adjacent to Burien's shoreline produce a unique marine environment rich in nutrients hosting a remarkable diversity of fish and other animal life.



Source: Burien Comprehensive Plan Critical Areas Map with wildlife habitat overlays

The open channel and shallow shoreline bench along Burien provides wintering and breeding habitat for a wide variety of marine birds including loons, grebes, cormorants, gulls, ducks, geese, shorebirds, and alcids.

Fish and wildlife species - special status/priority fish and wildlife species (or particular relationships between species and habitat) that rely on the marine habitat around the Burien shoreline for at least part of the year or part of their life cycle include the following birds: Brandt's cormorant, regular large concentrations of brant (geese), common loon, common murre, breeding concentrations of cormorants and alcids, breeding areas for great blue heron, regular marine concentrations of harlequin duck, marbled murrelet, non-breeding concentrations of Barrow's goldeneye, common goldeneye, and bufflehead; non-breeding concentrations of loons, grebes, cormorants, and alcids; non-breeding concentrations of plovers, sandpipers, and phalaropes; bald eagle, peregrine falcon, and regular large concentrations of waterfowl, western grebe.

Kelp and eelgrass beds - eelgrass is a highly productive plant that provides trophic functions and nutrient infusions for the entire coastal zone. Eelgrass beds provide an important stopover and wintering area along the Pacific flyway for a variety of migratory birds. The eelgrass beds around Vashon Island and in Puget Sound have been found to be 3 times more productive to diving birds, for example, than non-vegetated near-shore areas.

Shellfish - commercial and recreational shellfish inhabit the mud, sands, and rocky substrata of Vashon Island and Burien shoreline's passages, bays, harbors, and coves. Intertidal areas support hard shell clams including butter clams, native littleneck, manila clams, cockles, and horse clams. Geoducks typically burrow in subtidal areas up to 2 to 3 feet into the mud or soft sand. Shrimp, crab, and oysters also inhabit the shoreline areas. Dungeness crab frequent eelgrass beds, and red rock crab inhabit rocky terrain with less silt content.

Surf smelt, Pacific herring, and Pacific sand lance spawning areas - are found in marine near-shore areas year-round, and spawning may occur year-round. Most Pacific herring stocks spawn from late January through early April. Spawning areas for Pacific sand lance are scattered along near-shore areas around the Burien shoreline, with spawning in intertidal areas occurring annually from 1 November through 15 February.

Estuarine habitat

Estuaries are semi-enclosed bodies of water that are freely connected with the open sea and within which saltwater mixes with freshwater drainage. Estuaries create transitions between marine, freshwater, and terrestrial environments that support a rich and diverse variety of wildlife species.

Along the Burien shoreline, the estuarine environment may extend inland for some distance where freshwater from streams mixes with saltwater tidal currents. Salinity content may be affected by the amount of freshwater flow that enters the saltwater, the strength of the tides, and the resulting amount of fresh to saltwater mixing. Salinity is not constant within such a mixing and may vary with depth and area of flow. The animals and plants that are established within the area are often better predictors of the estuary's influence than salinity alone.

Salmon Creek drainage area streams have largely channelized or diverted where they merge with Puget Sound negating the potential for estuary habitat. Miller and Walker Miller Creeks flow naturally into Puget Sound and the merging area supports a limited estuary.

Wildlife species - estuaries support many of the same species that are present in the marine environment described above in some species, such as oysters, are more abundant in estuaries.

Freshwater habitat

Freshwater bodies include lakes, rivers, creeks, wetlands, riparian areas, and all other types of water bodies not included in estuaries or marine habitat that have a low ocean salt content. Refer to the City of Burien Shoreline Master Program for additional details.

Freshwater habitats support different wildlife than saltwater systems, particularly species that depend on wetland vegetation. However, 87% of all wildlife and fish species are estimated to depend on streams, wetlands, or other freshwater bodies during some part of the species life cycle for drinking water, foraging, nesting, and migratory movements.

Riparian areas - are the wooded or vegetated corridors located along rivers, streams, and springs. Riparian corridors transport water, soil, plant seeds, and nutrients to downstream areas - and thereby serve as important migration routes for many wildlife species. Riparian areas, though small in overall size, are one of the most important sources of wildlife bio-diversity in the landscape.

Riparian zones are located along the undeveloped shoreline of Salmon, Miller, and Walker Creeks, the numerous tributary streams within their drainage corridors, and the numerous ponds and wetlands.

Wetland habitats - are water bodies less than 20 acres in size or less than 6 feet in depth and include marshes, swamps, bogs, seeps, wet meadows, shallow ponds, and lakes.

Like riparian areas, wetlands support species in great diversities, densities, and productivity. The wooded areas that are located adjacent to wetlands provide nesting areas, forage, and other cover that is critical to wetland-dependent species like most waterfowl or small mammals like beaver.

Wetlands - there are 2 principal wetland types within Burien:

- **Scrub/shrub wetlands** - with seasonal flooding, characterized by hardhack, willow, red alder or redosier dogwood, and
- **Shallow marsh** - deep marsh, and open water wetlands.

Wildlife species - freshwater zones support terrestrial and aquatic insects and resident and migratory fish species. Anadromous fish species include coho, chinook, and chum salmon, and steelhead. Naturally occurring or established species include largemouth bass, brown bullheads, bluegill, and black crappie. Freshwater zones also support a variety of birds and mammals including salamanders, frogs, osprey, ducks, river otter, and beaver.

Urban and agricultural developments have substantially reduced wildlife habitat through the years. However, valuable habitat qualities still remain in the undeveloped, large native vegetation tracts and around the remaining wetlands and riparian (streamside) forests of the upper reaches of Salmon, Miller, and Walker Creeks especially in Salmon Creek Ravine and Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park), the numerous tributary streams within their drainage corridors, and the numerous ponds and wetlands.

Wetlands and riparian zones may support muskrat, mink, otter, beaver, raccoon, and weasel. Water bodies, wetlands, and adjacent fields also provide suitable nesting and feeding habitat for mallard ducks, American widgeons, green-wing teal, common coot, common merganser, blue-wing teals and great blue heron, and lesser and greater Canadian goose.

Portions of the Salmon and Miller Creek drainage areas (particularly in Salmon Creek Ravine and Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park) also provide habitat for the bald eagle and osprey. The northern bald eagle is listed as a potentially threatened or endangered species on Washington State's endangered and threatened lists. No other endangered or threatened species are known to occur in the Burien area.

Fisheries - the lower reaches of Miller and Walker Creeks provide freshwater habitat for species of anadromous fish, including steelhead, and salmon species, that live in saltwater but return to spawn in freshwater.

Fish that have been identified in the Puget Sound region include rainbow trout, cutthroat, dolly varden, eastern brook trout, whitefish, largemouth bass, perch, crappie, and catfish. The Washington Department of Fisheries &

Wildlife and various Tribal Governments supplement the natural stocks in order to maintain river runs for most of these species.

Terrestrial habitat

Terrestrial areas are the upland lands located above freshwater, estuarine, and marine water zones. The zones may extend from the level lowlands that border marsh or creek banks to the tops of the bluffs, hills, or foothills located around the Cascade Mountain range.

Plants - portions of Burien - particularly the wooded hillsides along Puget Sound and within Salmon Creek Ravine and Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park, include several second growth lowland forested cover types including coniferous, deciduous, and mixed coniferous/deciduous forests.

Grasses, agricultural crops, and riparian vegetation cover the lowland areas of the Miller and Walker Creek drainage corridors - the latter prevalent along creek floodplains and at the edge of wetlands or open bodies of water.

Species - terrestrial zones support a variety of insects, amphibians, reptiles, lowland and upland birds, large, and small mammals. Some species, such as eagles, osprey, and murrelets forage in other habitats but nest in upland locations in wooded areas in or near riparian zones.

Animals - urban and agricultural developments within Burien have substantially reduced wildlife habitat through the years. However, valuable habitat qualities still remain in undeveloped, large native vegetation tracts along the hillsides, and around the remaining wetlands and riparian (streamside) forests along the Salmon, Miller, and Walker Creek corridors.

Some limited portions of the Miller and Walker Creek drainage corridors and other low-lying areas including the remaining cleared lands under SeaTac Airport approach zones are now utilized as commercial and industrial activities with some woody vegetation, grasses, and wildflowers. These materials provide food for migratory waterfowl and deer, habitat for rodents and other small animals, and prey for predators like garter snakes, barn owls, red-tailed hawk, and fox.

Other important habitats - smaller wooded tracts are suitable for many plant and animal communities and may provide temporary cover for some species for foraging or migratory movement. Large parks and open spaces can serve as wildlife refuges in urban areas - including Salmon Creek Ravine, Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park, and the cleared lands in North SeaTac Park and under the airport approaches. However, the number and diversity of species declines in direct relation to the size of the habitat and where the habitat has been isolated from other natural areas.

What unique and threatened species are located in Burien?

The Washington Department of Natural Resources lists a number of sensitive species in danger of becoming extinct within the freshwater and terrestrial habitats including:

Species in danger of extinction

Freshwater habitat

- Bog clubmoss - that grows in wetlands adjacent to low elevation lakes,
- Chain-fern - that grows along stream banks and moist seep areas, mostly near saltwater.
- Bristly sedge - that grows in marshes and wet meadows,
- Water lobelia (*lobelia dortmania*) - that grows in emergent freshwater wetlands,
- White meconella (*meconella oregana*) - that grows on open ground where wet in the spring, and
- Woolgrass (*scirpus cyperinus*) - that grows in wet low ground.

There are 4 threatened or endangered plants that could occur including:

- Flowered sedge - found in and near sphagnum bogs,
- Choriso bog orchid - found in wet meadows and bogs,
- Fringed pinesap - found in deep shady woods at moderate to low elevations especially in old forest, and
- Golden Indian paintbrush - found in moist lowland meadows and prairies.

Freshwater and terrestrial habitat

- Western yellow oxalis - that grows in moist coastal woods and dry open slopes.

Terrestrial habitat

- Fringed pinesap - that grows in duff and humus of shaded, low-elevation coniferous forest,
- Gnome plant - that grows in deep humus in coniferous forest,
- Chick lupine (*lupinus micipcarpus*) - that grows in dry to moist soils, and
- Great pole monium (*pole monium corneum*) - that grows in thickets, woodlands, and forest openings.

Species of concern, threatened, or endangered

The Washington Department of Fisheries & Wildlife has listed the following species as being species of concern, threatened, or endangered:

Marine, estuarine, freshwater, and terrestrial habitat

- Bald eagle - a threatened species that depend on coniferous, uneven-aged

forests near rivers, lakes, marine, and estuarine zones for nesting and foraging food,

- Osprey - a species of concern that depend on tall trees or dead snags near large bodies of water,
- River otter - a threatened species that depend on wooded streams and estuaries for food, forage, and cover, and
- Harlequin duck - that depend on trees and shrub streams, banks, boulder and gravel shorelines, and kelp beds.

Estuarine, and freshwater and terrestrial habitat

- Cavity nesting ducks - (Barrow's goldeneye, bufflehead, wood duck, hood mergansen) that depend on tree cavities adjacent to sloughs, lakes, beaver ponds, and other open water wetlands.

Freshwater and terrestrial habitat

- Blue goose - that depend on open foothills created by fire or small clearcuts with streams, springs, and other water features,
- Band-tailed pigeon - that depend on coastal forests with diverse tree ages, and farmland, mineral springs, and streams with gravel deposits,
- Sea-run and coastal cutthroat, and chinook salmon - that depend on wetlands and riparian corridors for spawning and rearing,
- Steelhead - that depend on wetlands and riparian corridors for spawning and rearing,
- Green-backed heron - that depend on wooded ponds, and
- Beaver - that depend on wetlands and streams for food, forage, and cover.

Terrestrial habitat

- Purple martin - a species of concern that depend on tree cavities in low lying forests,
- Pileated woodpecker - that depend on mature second growth coniferous forests with snags and fallen trees,
- Columbian black-tailed deer - that depend on deep forest for cover,

What are the land use implications?

Some plant, fish, and wildlife habitat have irretrievably been lost as the Burien area developed and as the pace of development continues. These impacts can be minimized, however, by sensitive land use patterns, innovative design concepts, and performance oriented development standards that:

- **Replant** - native vegetation along the Walker and Miller Creek shorelines and along tributary stream drainage corridors,
- **Remove** - artificial shoreline constructions and freshwater impoundment or diversions,

- **Control** - stormwater runoff content and quality that enters the natural drainage system and within the watershed in natural impoundment on-site where pollutants can be separated from natural drainage,
- **Cultivate** - berry or fruit plants that support and retain native species, and
- **Cluster** - roadways and other improvements to preserve natural shorelines and contiguous open spaces as common lands.

The most effective preservation strategies separate the most intense urban activities from the most sensitive habitats by creating woodland conservancies, open space corridors, and other protected areas.

Where appropriate, the Park, Recreation, & Open Space Plan should preserve and enhance the most critical and unique habitat areas by purchasing development rights or title for resource conservancy parks such as Salmon Creek Ravine, Seahurst (Ed Munro) Park, and Eagle's Landing.

What is Burien's history?

The arrival of Indian groups in the Pacific Northwest cannot be dated with great precision. However, archaeological investigations at the Manis mastodon site near Sequim on the Olympic Peninsula indicate man was in the area as early as 12,000 years ago. Sea level rises approximately 5,000 years ago, however, may have inundated even older sites.

There are more than 5,000 Native American sites on record in the state, only a few of which have been professionally evaluated. Generally, sites are located at river conjunctions within valleys and along the shoreline.

Native American history

Native peoples similar to the Nisqually and Puyallup Indians are believed to have lived in the Puget Sound region some 6,000 years ago, their way of life essentially unchanged for hundreds of generations.

The Puget Sound native peoples, including the Duwamish, Nisqually, Puyallup and other tribes, were of the Coast Salish language group, part of the highly developed Northwest Coast Indians, one of the most sophisticated nonagricultural societies in the world.

Duwamish - the area's first inhabitants were the Hwadaomish, a Salish word meaning "People of the River." Now known as the Duwamish, these Native American people had a regular winter village along Elliott Bay's southern tide flats (midden sites include one near the Port of Seattle's Terminal 105), and another upstream near Renton.

The Duwamish, Muckleshoot and other tribes likely camped at Three Tree Point, drawn by the area's rich fishing, clamming and berry-picking grounds.

Because of its geographical prominence, central location in Puget Sound and nearby freshwater springs, Three Tree Point would have also made a natural stopping-over place on long canoe trips.

Three Tree Point was strategically important to Puget Sound Indians as well. With their panoramic views of Puget Sound's main channel, the bluffs and trails above the water offered a perfect vantage point from which to detect approaching war canoes — particularly those of Tlingit, Haida, and Tshimshian raiders who conducted frequent slave-capturing forays into Puget Sound from as far away as Vancouver Island and Southeast Alaska.

Indians and settlers alike used the “Old Indian Trail” well into the late 1800s as the main pathway between Three Tree Point and Elliott Bay to the north, and Normandy Park (and perhaps Redondo and farther) to the south.

(A mile-long, well-preserved section of the trail north of Three Tree Point was set aside for pedestrian use by a Burien City Council Ordinance in 1993. Another remnant of the original path extends southeast from the hill east of Three Tree Point as far as the Normandy Park Cove, the last segment via an undeveloped right-of-way.)

Indian myths and legends

According to Northwest historian David Buerge, Three Tree Point was one of the richest mythological areas in Puget Sound. Like Brace Point, its companion to the north, the waters off Three Tree Point were haunted by a supernatural creature, an ai-YAH-hus, an immense serpent with the forelegs and antlers of a deer. Great snakes inhabited the bluffs above the water whose rumblings occasionally triggered deadly avalanches.

Early explorations

In 1792 British naval Captain George Vancouver, on a mission to settle British fur-trading claims against Spain, surveyed the northwest coast of North America and determined the existence of the fabled “Northwest Passage,” sailing into Puget Sound on his ship *Discovery*.

Vancouver proceeded south through the Sound's main channel along the eastern shore of Vashon Island, passing opposite Three Tree Point and Des Moines, where he saw dense clouds of smoke blanketing the thick forests crowding the water's edge.

(Puget Sound Indians routinely set fire to the woods to make foot travel easier, drive out deer and other game, and create open spaces where berries and other sun-loving plants could thrive.)

After Vancouver's expedition, Puget Sound remained essentially unexplored by Europeans for the next 32 years. Then, in 1824, a 40-man expedition led by James McMillan of the Hudson's Bay Company set out from Astoria to find

a passage for small boats (probably Indian canoes, to start with) between the Columbia and Fraser Rivers.

The party reached Eld Inlet at the southern end of Puget Sound on December 4, 1824, spent the night on Vashon Island and continued north to the Fraser River. Returning south through Puget Sound, they were driven ashore by rough weather and spent the evening of December 23 camped at Three Tree Point. They completed the round-trip to Astoria in 6 weeks.

By 1833 the Hudson's Bay Company had established posts on the Fraser River and at Fort Nisqually, making Puget Sound an important canoe route between the two. At the time, the Oregon Country was jointly ruled by the US and Great Britain.

In 1841 Lieutenant Charles Wilkes was placed in command of US Pacific and Arctic explorations and proceeded to survey Northwest Coast rivers and harbors, naming many geographical features, including Elliott Bay, Williams Point (in present-day Lincoln Park), Blake Island, Point Roberts (now Alki Point), Maury Island, Quartermaster Harbor and Point Pully, named for Robert Pully, a quartermaster in one of Wilkes' crews.

(The Washington State Board of Geographic Names changed the name Point Pully to Three Tree Point in 1975, in deference to the cape's more popular title.)

In the mid-1850s Indian uprisings prompted local Militia volunteers to build Fort "Lone Tree Point" on the shores of Puget Sound. The fort was probably on or near Three Tree Point, referred to as "Lone Tree Point" on old King County maps.

Early settlement: 1850-1900

The first non-native settler near Three Tree Point was probably William H. Brown, a 33-year-old pioneer who spotted the homestead site while rowing a boat north along the eastern shore of Puget Sound in 1853.

In 1864, George Oulett purchased parcels on the beachfront on Burien's north coastline and eventually housed his family in the area.

The next homesteader to file a claim in the Three Tree Points area was James Howe, for 120 acres on September 20, 1869. The property appears to have included most of the beachfront along the northern shore of Three Tree Point.

In 1872 Mike Kelly and his family ventured up the Duwamish River Valley. Kelly filed a claim for 160 acres near present-day 146th and 16th South and named the whole area Sunnysdale, the approximate borders of which were

110th on the north, the community of Des Moines on the south, Military Road on the east, and Puget Sound on the west.

Because most roads were still relatively crude in the 1870s and 1880s, Three Tree Point remained somewhat isolated from other settlements - at least by land. But the Puget Sound “water highway” provided an easy means of getting from place to place around the region for well over 50 years, from the 1850s into the 1900s.

Passengers, freight and mail were transported by canoe, schooner and a fleet of small steamboats (named the “Mosquito Fleet”) between cities such as Seattle and Tacoma, and flagstops such as Des Moines and Three Tree Point, which were included as ports of call in 1886.

The McDowell Transportation Company, begun in 1898 and using 7 boats enjoyed a thriving business as more and more people flocked to summer resorts on Three Tree Point, Vashon Island, and other Puget Sound locales. In its heyday, the Mosquito Fleet made up to 8 stops daily at Three Tree Point.

In 1880, Gottlieb Von Boorian, a German immigrant, arrived in Sunnydale, which was only a community of trails and small houses without roads or commercial buildings. Von Boorian built a cabin on the southeast corner of Lake Burien and reportedly formed the community into a town bearing his name (misspelled over the years). A real estate office was built and soon attracted large numbers of new residents to Burien.

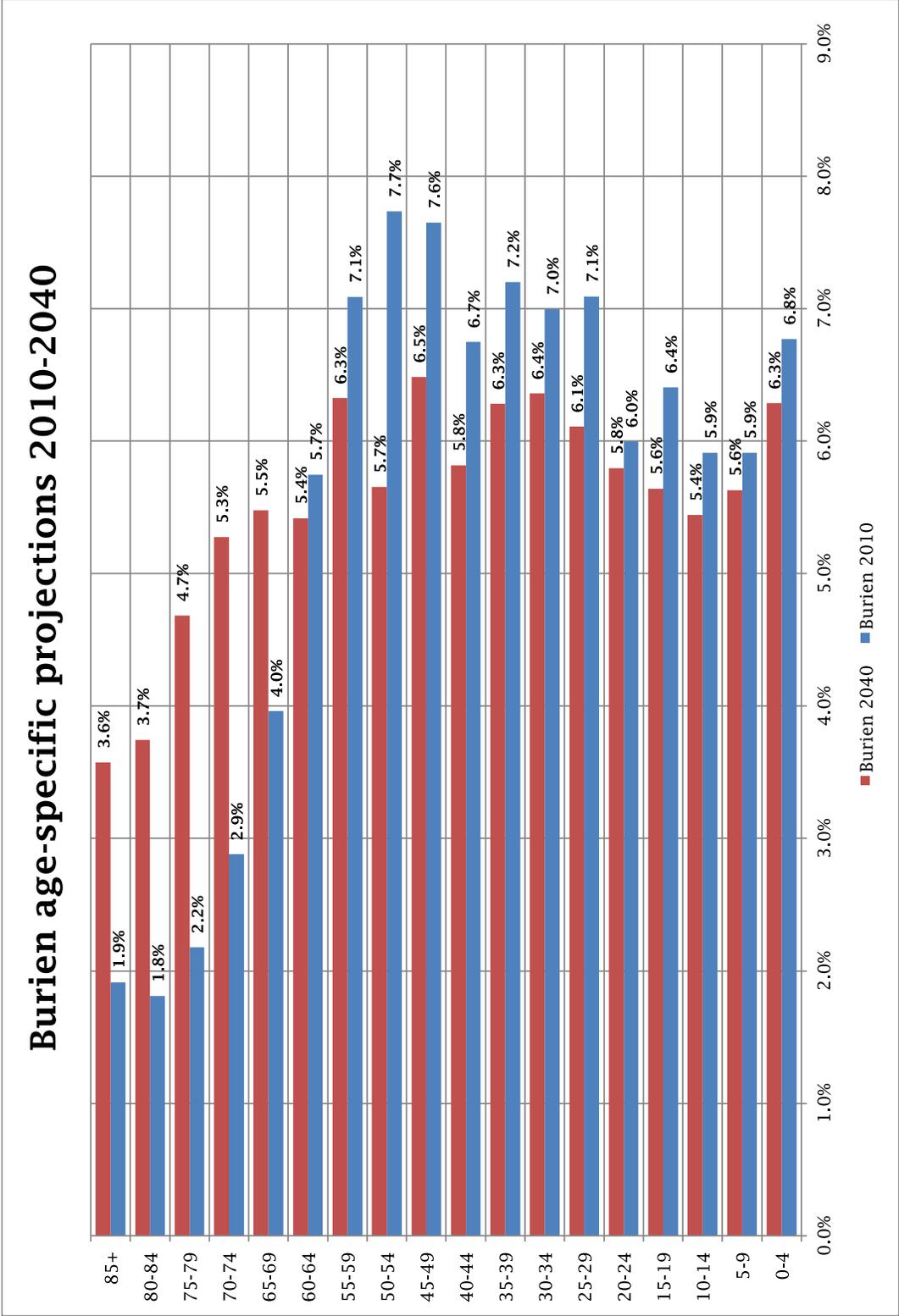
1900 - present

In 1905, the Washington Timber & Logging Company ran a railroad from Seola Beach to a roundhouse at 28th Avenue and Roxbury. Another rail line ran from Highland Park to Greendale and on to Hick’s Lake. The remnants of the cement pillars that supported the log-dumping end of the logging railroad are still visible at Seola Beach.

In 1911 the Highland Park & Lake Burien Railway was organized to improve transportation to and promote development of the area. From 1912 to 1929, a 9-mile stretch of irregular, winding road brought electric railcar service, known as the “Toonerville Trolley” and “Gallopig Goose,” to the area. The railroad went as far as 152nd SW and SW 21st Avenue in Seahurst.

Incorporation

The City of Burien was finally incorporated on 28 February 1993 by voter approval. Burien has annexed unincorporated King County in the years since the most recent being the North Highlands area in 2010.



What are Burien’s socioeconomic characteristics?

Population - Burien’s population before annexation was estimated by the Washington State Office of Management (OFM) to be 31,881 in the year 2000 and 33,313 in the year 2010 - equal to an increase of 1,432 people or an average annual increase of 0.4% per year over the 10-year period. Burien’s population in 2017, following the annexation of North Highlands, was estimated by OFM to be 50,680.

	2000	2010	2017	2020
Burien	31,881	33,313	50,680	52,000

Burien’s Community Development Department estimates the city’s population could reach 52,000 by the year 2020 equal to an increase of 1,320 people or an average annual increase of 0.9% over the 3-year period. Burien’s population will likely stabilize around 52,000 once the downtown has built-out the city’s share of medium density mixed-use developments.

Age triangle - is a graphic depiction of the percent of the population in age groups with the largest percent in the youngest 0-4 age and the smallest in the oldest age group indicating the impacts of a high birth rate and the gradual amortization of age groups due to increasing death rates.

Burien’s 2013 age triangle is actually a bell shape where the World War II baby boom is aging into senior status and the subsequent younger age groups are less proportional to the total population. Burien has also developed a specialized social attraction retaining or attracting a less proportion of older and younger residents that is typical of King County.

The projected age triangle to the year 2040 will increase Burien’s concentration of older adults as the population ages in general if the city continues to attract persons due to its social specialization within the larger region.

Social statistics - since 2005, the US Census Bureau has conducted annual samples of the population in the American Community Survey (ACS) on a jurisdictional basis for the entire United States including Washington State, Puget Sound (King, Kitsap, Snohomish, and Pierce Counties), and Burien. Following is a brief summary - detailed statistics are provided in Appendix A.

	US	WA	Puget Sound	King County	Burien
Median age	37.3	37.3	37.0	37.1	37.3
Percent 65+	13%	13%	11%	11%	13%
Hispanic/Latino	17%	11%	9%	9%	24%
Language other than English	21%	19%	21%	26%	34%

Percent families	66%	65%	63%	59%	64%
Average household size	2.63	2.54	2.56	2.42	2.70
Median family income	\$64,719	\$72,168	\$84,049	\$92,510	\$64,546
Median per capita income	\$28,155	\$30,742	\$35,207	\$39,911	\$26,025
Median house value	\$176,700	\$262,100	\$324,111	\$377,300	\$274,500
Median rent	\$904	\$973	\$1,094	\$1,131	\$1,011
Percent population in poverty	15.4%	13.4%	11.4%	11.5%	18.2%

Source: American Community Survey 2009-2015

As shown, Burien has concentrated an older, more Hispanic or Latino, speaking a language other than English, of larger household size, lower median family and per capita income, in less expensive housing, with a larger percentage of the population in poverty than is typical of King County or Puget Sound.

What are Burien's future socioeconomic prospects?

In 2006, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) projected the future composition of population, employment, income, and housing within the Puget Sound (King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties) region based on regional and national trends. PSRC's projected trends will affect Burien in much the same manner but within the socioeconomic specializations that Burien has developed.

Puget Sound	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Persons/employee	1.86	1.83	1.80	1.78	1.76	1.74
Average household size	2.42	2.38	2.33	2.30	2.26	2.22

Source: Puget Sound Economic & Demographic Forecast, 2006

As shown, PSRC projections expect the number of persons per employee in the population will decline as will average household size due to an aging of the population and changing social norms concerning employment, marriage, and child bearing.

Conclusion

Based on present and expected socioeconomic characteristics, Burien park, recreation, and open space demands would be expected to reflect family and slightly older age populations of Hispanic or Latino origin speaking languages other than English in families with less income, in older less valued housing, than would be typical of the park, recreation, and open space demands of the surrounding county, region, state, and nation. The implication would be for a greater need for subsidized recreational opportunities.

The slight increase in population projected to occur in the coming years may continue to attract the atypical age and household population groups that have located in the city to date.

